

## *The New Tribe: Conflicts and Continuities in the Social Organization of Urban Māori*

Roger C. A. Maaka

Those legions of us who live in the cities, also look forward to representation. Will our *iwi* come to town to reclaim us all, or shall we borrow a strategy from age-old tradition, or start anew, and form our own?

R. Himona, *Te Pūtātara*

Heralding the establishment of the Māori National Congress, the statement quoted encapsulates the underlying concerns I seek to address in this paper. "Those legions of us who live in the cities" or provincial towns constitute some 73 percent of all Māori (NZDS 1991). We "look forward to representation" because we have no clear idea of who represents the urban Māori voice. Have we no say in our own destiny? "Will our *iwi* come to town to reclaim us?" or have we who live in town, that is, the majority, been disowned by our *iwi*? "Shall we borrow a strategy from age-old tradition, or start anew and form our own?" Can we establish ourselves without recourse to our host tribe(s)?

Two of the realities of Māori society today are that 80 percent of people identifying as Māori live outside their tribal areas and that some 27.5 percent acknowledge no tribal affiliation (NZDS 1991). If the vision for the advancement of Māori society is restricted to autonomous tribal development predicated on a traditional picture of one tribe, one territory, that vision is flawed, and its appropriateness for our development as we enter the twenty-first century is questionable. In questioning the tribe as the primary vehicle for development, I am not arguing a case of tribal versus pan-Māori<sup>1</sup> development, but that political organization must reflect social reality.

In this paper I have set out to understand the nature of tribal association in the 1990s as a current phenomenon, rather than accept a commonly held view that the tribe, as conventionally defined, is a social reality. I will use as evidence an attempt to establish a tribal organization by a group of urban Māori, and the effect of the interaction between this group and governmental policies.

## INTRODUCTION

The impetus for this paper came from observing the turmoil in the Māori community during the period 1984 to 1992, when successive governments pursued a policy that became known commonly as Iwi Development. *Iwi* can mean either “people” or “tribe”;<sup>2</sup> *iwi* as people, without any qualifying word, implies Māori (the wider Māori population), whereas *iwi* as tribe refers to a specific group of people who share a common ancestry, history, and territory. Tribal membership is exclusive, and each tribe operates under its own particular set of social rules.

There is a strong tension between *iwi* defined as “people” and *iwi* defined as “tribe.” Does Iwi Development therefore mean advancement for Māori as a homogeneous group, or does it mean advancement for Māori under the umbrella of the traditional structure of the tribe? This tension is not being resolved or even seriously addressed. Why not?

Non-Māori observers often fail to understand the subtleties and nuances of inter- and intratribal relationships, and the prevailing political climate in recent years has caused a reluctance among informed non-Māori commentators to offer independent views. A general view of many non-Māori is that if Māori want to be taken seriously then we should make up our minds as to who or what is our representative voice. This opinion has been publicly expressed by the former Race Relations Conciliator Chris Laidlaw: “As the Sealords fisheries deal showed, a contest of egos between high-profile Māori protagonists, can threaten any well-drafted compromise. Māori must not let their leaders get away with that kind of destructive grandstanding. The government could quite rightly say, ‘How can we settle if the other side can’t get its act together?’” (1993, 40).

It is also difficult for Māori to address this issue because it appears to challenge the fundamental social structure of traditional life and the very core of our identity: descent from the ancestors. In a situation where

Māori identity is under continual threat from the forces of western culture, many Māori find it very difficult to question the foundations of that identity. It is a dilemma that I identified in a paper on *kaumātuatanga* 'eldership': "Minority indigenous peoples in post-colonial situations struggle to balance a desire to modernise their cultures while retaining those institutions from the past which foster and perpetuate their distinctive identity" (Maaka 1993, 213).

However, this tension does exist and continues to affect Māori development, as has been observed by some commentators:

[T]he urbanised Maoris of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch . . . too often are devalued by iwi Maoris and the Government. (Editorial, *Christchurch Press*, 20 Feb 1993)

Maoridom's "march back to tribalism" in recent years was a tragic mistake, the Eastern Maori MP, Mr Peter Tapsell said in Invercargill yesterday. Many Maoris were clinging to tribalism in desperation during a time of great change, even though tribal groupings were of more relevance to the past century than this one, he said. (*Christchurch Press*, 29 Sept 1993)

### *The Tribe*

The tribe before contact with the west has been well researched. It is not my intention to enter into a debate surrounding this topic, but only to restate some generally accepted facts. Prior to 1840 Māori saw themselves solely in terms of tribal groups; even the word *Māori* as an all-encompassing term was not used until about 1850 (Williams 1971, 179). This usage was adopted in the self-identifying process that was necessary to differentiate Māori from the significant numbers of others now residing with them, the European or Pākehā.

Traditionally, tribal organization consisted of three social units: *whānau* 'extended family', *hapū* 'clan', and *iwi* 'confederation of *hapū*'. These units exhibited a host of regional variations in size and function, and the lines are blurred as to when a *whānau* became a *hapū* and a *hapū* became an *iwi*. Regardless of regional differences, however, all shared common characteristics: they were kinship based, claiming descent from a common ancestor, and they lived within a designated territory (Firth 1959, 110-116).

In the precontact period, the tribe was a politically autonomous kin group, living in its own tribal territory. Other tribes came into that terri-

tory either as visitors or as enemy. Tribal *mana* 'prestige' required that host tribes (*tangata whenua*) lavish hospitality on visitors (*manuhiri*) even though that hospitality could stretch the resources of the hosts to the limit. Because of scarce resources, visits were usually of limited duration, and visitors could easily outstay their welcome. A prolonged stay was provocative and usually resulted in war. Hospitality received had to be returned and was an integral part of the reciprocal interchange that dominated relationships between both individuals and groups.

The nineteenth-century social development of autonomous tribes identifying as one people—Māori—was only for dealing with the outside world. Internally, belonging to a tribe remained central to an individual's sense of identity. Basically, being Māori still means having a widespread network of relations without whom one's identity is incomplete. In other words, I am because I belong. These sentiments were expressed by the respected Tuhoe elder, the late John Rangihau, in his essay "Being Māori" (1975, 221), in which he defined his identity in terms of his *Tūhoetanga* 'Tūhoe-ness' and rejected, in this context, *Māoritanga* 'Māoriness' as meaningless.

Today, as a result of the Treaty of Waitangi Amendment Act 1985, the officially acknowledged tribal groups and territories are those that existed in 1840. The attempt to freeze-frame the tribe, and indeed Māori culture as a whole, at an arbitrary point in time ignores the fact that social groupings were a process. Tribes are not static organizations; their fortunes wax and wane. The freezing of the tribes at the signing of a treaty with a European power is concomitant with the colonization process and the influence of state legislation on Māori society. The matter is not without dispute among Māori, especially those whose tribe's fortunes had waned by 1840.

### *The Retribalization of Māori Society*

After unsuccessful attempts to establish a separate parliament in the 1890s, the tribes had little executive power and their relevance to everyday life diminished throughout this century. A brief resurgence of tribal organizations occurred during World War II, with the recruitment of the 28th Māori Battalion on tribal lines, but was countered by the rapid urbanization that took place in the 1950s and 1960s. By the 1970s many Māori had become detribalized. With urbanization, tribal identity for most Māori was relegated to parochial nostalgia. However, as Māori society entered



its third decade of urbanization a newfound confidence and sophistication, along with a new generation of educated leaders, began to make itself felt. An example was the appointment of Kara Puketapu as secretary of Māori Affairs in 1978. Puketapu had been a senior public servant (assistant commissioner in the State Services Commission) and combined experience and qualifications with a strong Māori background (Butterworth 1990, 112). He implemented his *Tū Tangata* 'Stand Tall' concept, which had self-determination and self-reliance as its underlying philosophy—Māori control of Māori programs—the same year.

At the 1984 *Hui Taumata* (Māori Economic Summit Conference) Māori continued that call: "We understand our needs best, give us the resources and we will provide the most appropriate and effective programmes." The unpredicted but, in retrospect, logical consequence of this development was the establishment of constitutionalized tribal voices and the demise of the Māori Affairs department. It was a logical progression, because Māori control of Māori programs meant that there had to be active Māori institutions capable of running them. The larger pan-Māori organizations in existence were tainted with a paternalism that had its roots in the colonial past and included religious, service, and political groups. It was argued that religious denominational and political party differences were artificial, divisive, and served the interests of their Pākehā parent bodies rather than those of Māori. For many Māori the only solution lay in the return to the dormant but deep-rooted concept of tribe.

Retribalization, with its implicit emphasis on tribal exclusiveness—of territorial rights, of dialect, of customary practices—and political organization, has a decentralizing effect. The more strongly a tribal identity is imposed, the greater the emphasis on the *tangata whenua-manuhiri* 'host-visitor' relationship in the interaction between people as individuals and as groups. People have to decide where their tribal loyalties lie, even within the nuclear family. The host-visitor relationship places obligations on both parties: *manaaki* 'care' for the visitors on the part of the hosts, and total respect for the hosts' rights on that of the visitors.

### *Government Policy and Māori Development*

Māori society does not exist in a vacuum. Beside its internal dynamics it must interact with the state and the associated ideologies of party politics. As a relatively powerless political minority,<sup>3</sup> Māori have always had to

operate within the parameters of government policies, which seldom reflect Māori interests. It is naive to think that the government simply responds to Māori political demands without pursuing an agenda of its own; there is a cause and effect syndrome in the interrelationship between government policy and Māori political aspirations. The question is, who is in the driver's seat? the government, by manipulating Māori leadership and cultural institutions? or Māori leadership, through lobbying the state political system? In the period covered by this study, the free-market agendas initiated by the fourth Labour government and extended by the succeeding National government in 1990 have influenced, and continue to influence, Māori development.

In 1984 the fourth Labour government came to power on a ticket of consultation, and to illustrate that their intent was genuine they organized the *Hui Taumata* to hear what Māori leaders had to say. The call from the conference was quite clear: Māori people wanted to break the dependency cycle of government welfare schemes and have control over their own destiny. As it happened, this call for autonomy gelled with the free-market policies—"Rogernomics"—espoused by then Minister of Finance Roger Douglas.

The direct effect for Māori of the government's free-market policies was the devolution of the Māori Affairs department. This department had its antecedents in the 1840 Protectorate of Aborigines and since that time had acted as the state's voice to Māori. After World War II it had become the major vehicle for government-funded Māori programs. Māori had a love-hate relationship with a department that had evolved from the paternalistic voice of the governor to, under Puketapu, a proactive program-delivering bureaucracy. Proactive or not, the department was still a bureaucracy and inextricably linked with government control. This fact, combined with a determination to break the dependency cycle, meant that Māori generally supported the move, although the specter of tribal factionalism worried certain sectors.

Had an elected government finally, after one-hundred-fifty years, officially acknowledged the tribe and given Māori exactly what was being sought? On the surface this indeed appeared to be the case. However, it is just as likely that the government was simply following its own free-market reforms and only paying lip service to Iwi Development. Although many Māori were suspicious of the government's motives, this period was

seen as a time of opportunity—a case of making hay while the sun shone, for those who were able.

Devolution meant that the department would hand over control of its programs to Māori groups over a period of five years. The thrust of government policies was toward tribal organizations:

Māori signatories to the Treaty of Waitangi represented a specific iwi or hapū. The strength of the traditional iwi structure is reflected in their continuing existence today. They are strong, enduring, sophisticated systems of cooperation and community effort and as such it has been advocated that they provide an appropriate means of delivering government programmes to Māori people. (NZMMA 1988a, 13)

The government nevertheless kept its options open, just in case “the Crown and others [were] still free to make contracts as the Māori Women’s Welfare League, urban Māori authorities, the New Zealand Māori Council or any other organisation they wish” (Rūnanga Iwi Act 1990, § 27).

The devolution agenda was to immediately (1989) phase out the Department of Māori Affairs and replace it with a Ministry of Māori Policy (*Manatū Māori* or Ministry of Māori Affairs), and an Iwi Transition Agency (*Te Tira Ahu Iwi*) to facilitate the transfer of programs. The Rūnanga Iwi Act was adopted by the fourth Labour government in 1990 to facilitate the devolution process and the establishment of Iwi Authorities<sup>4</sup> capable of running the department’s programs (see Appendix). The aim was to complete the whole process by 1994, at which stage the Iwi Transition Agency would be disbanded. “The Government is prepared to commit resources for five years to the development of the operational base of the iwi. At the end of this period the Government expects iwi will be fully operational—they will be able to manage their own programmes and negotiate independently with government agencies” (NZMMA 1988, 14).

Critics of the Rūnanga Iwi Act argued that it was a way for the government to opt out of its responsibilities to Māori. If this is true, then the repeal of the Act by the subsequently elected National government and the replacement of the Iwi Transition Agency and the Ministry of Māori Affairs by a single ministry, the Ministry of Māori Development (*Te Puni Kōkiri*) has not changed anything. It has simply consolidated the gains made by the previous government by permanently removing the former department’s service delivery capacity.

## THEORETICAL CONCERNS

A premise of this study is that the tribe as understood traditionally cannot function unchanged in the modern world. Equally, the tribe is central to existing assumptions about Māori identity. Therefore new theories on Māori social organization are needed. Any theory that will explain Māori society must focus on three key factors: colonization, indigenous status, and minority position.

Existing theories on ethnicity have a tendency to lump together all groups, whether immigrant, migrant, indigenous, minority, or majority, and seek a universal explanation for their position in society. Because this universality ignores the specifics and subtleties of Māori society, it can only serve a general utility. The theory of primordial ethnicity espoused by McRoberts (1979) argues that capitalism, rather than achieving the melting-pot society as hypothesized by Robert E. Park (1950), forces minority groups to seek solace and solutions to their social problems by reconstituting their past. The converse of McRoberts's primordial ethnicity is contextual ethnicity, that is, cultural practices that reflect the realities of a group's new environment. These theories can be used, initially anyway, by equating primordial with rural and tribal, and contextual with urban and pan-Māori.

A. Mafeje, writing about African society, does not accept that the tribe is a useful concept in understanding sociopolitical activity in any contemporary society: "The tribe is . . . a relatively undifferentiated society, practising a primitive economy and enjoying local autonomy. . . . To impose the same concept on societies that have been effectively penetrated by European colonialism and that have been successfully drawn into a capitalist money economy and a world market is a serious transgression" (Lian 1987, 455). This statement reflects the unease that emerging nations have with the concept of tribal ethnicity and its potential for divisiveness. The concept would once have been supported in theory by most Pākehā academics and fieldworkers, but in the last ten years there has been a major change in opinion. James Ritchie, for example, has stated: "Forty years ago I believed tribal Māori society to be anachronistic. I believed that it was in rapid transition to urban, optative forms, that it was a residual identity held on to while Māori people went about their lives in much the same way as other New Zealanders. I no longer hold such views" (Ritchie 1992, 6). The theme of Ritchie's book is that Māori development is becoming more rather than less tribal.

# TE RŪNANGA O NGĀTI KAHUNGUNU KI WAITAHA

I chose to study the formation of a tribal group living outside their tribal area because that permitted me to address the situation of the majority of Māori, particularly those who live in cities, where tribal affiliations are under most strain. I considered the formation, composition, and outside influences that have affected the development of *Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Kahungunu ki Waitaha* 'The Council of Ngāti Kahungunu in Canterbury' (Table 1).

Ngāti Kahungunu are a tribe of the East Coast of the North Island, in the areas now known as Hawkes Bay and Wairarapa (Map 1). They share

Table 1. Time Line of Government Policies and Māori Responses

1978	Tū Tangata policies adopted by Māori Affairs
1984	Fourth Labour government elected <i>Hui Taumata</i> (Māori Economic Summit)
1986	<i>Pūao-te-ata-tū</i> , Department of Social Welfare report issued (NZDSW) <i>Matua Whangai</i> program launched
1987	Te Māori Art Exhibition in Christchurch <i>Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Kahungunu ki Waitaha</i> formed <i>Te Rānanga o Ngā Matawaka</i> formed
1988	<i>He Tirohanga Rangapū</i> , Labour Party's discussion paper, issued <i>Te Urupare Rangapū</i> , Labour Party's policy statement, issued
1989	<i>Te Tira Ahu Iwi</i> , Iwi Transition Agency, and <i>Manatū Māori</i> , Ministry of Māori Affairs, replace Māori Affairs department
1990	Rūnanga Iwi Act passed National Party elected
1991	Rūnanga Iwi Act repealed Ka Awatea policy launched
1992	<i>Te Puni Kokiri</i> , Ministry of Māori Development, replaced <i>Te Tira Ahu Iwi</i> and <i>Manatū Māori</i> <i>Te Puni Kokiri</i> services contracted to Ngāi Tahu Ngā Matawaka established office in Christchurch

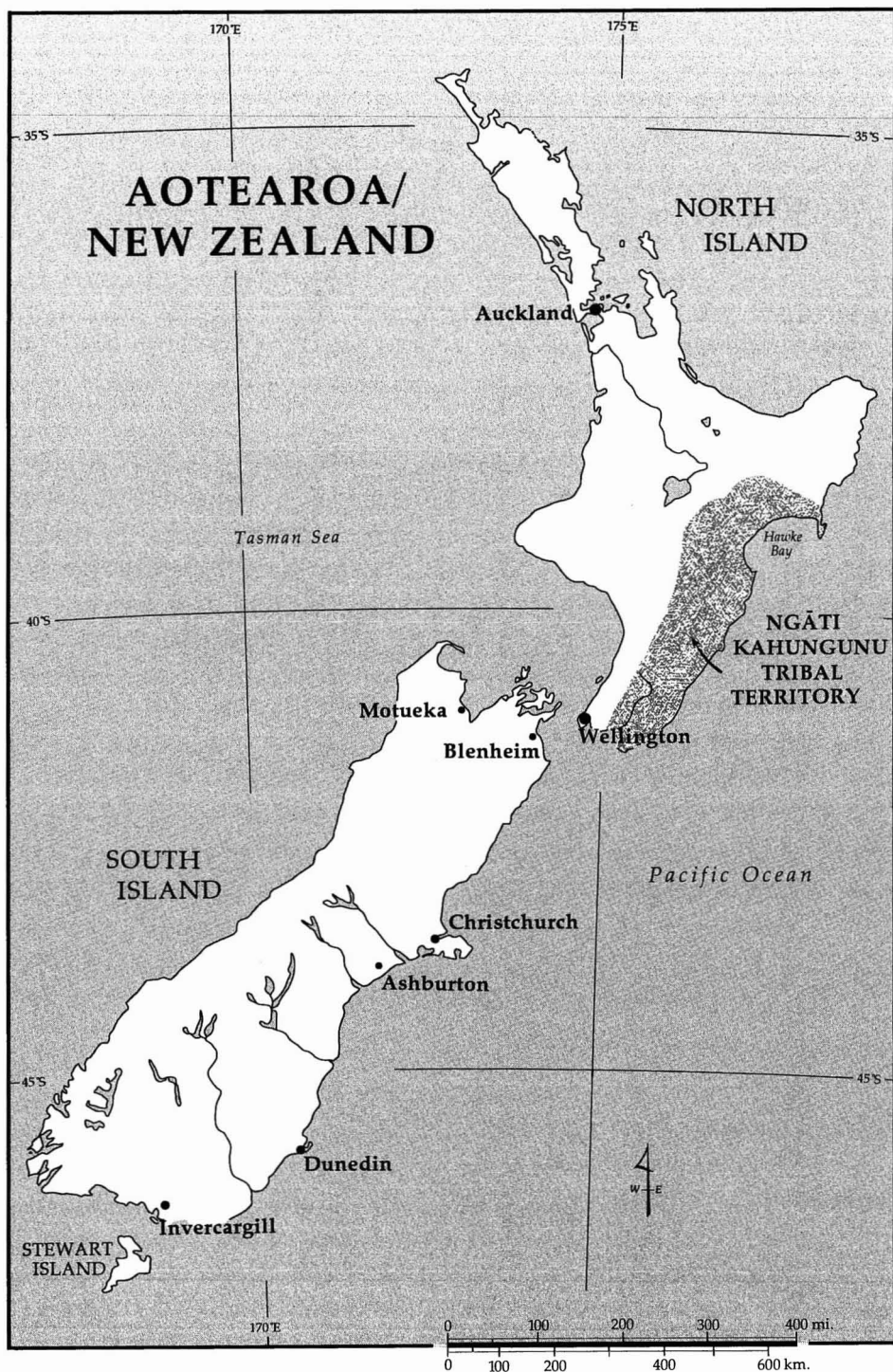


Table 2. *Iwi* Statistics for Christchurch City

Total Māori population in Christchurch	20,601
Largest tribal groups (including main and secondary affiliation)	
Ngāi Tahu	11,889
Ngā Puhi	4,950
Ngāti Porou	3,669
Ngāti Kahungunu	3,114
Tribal affiliations of Ngāti Kahungunu	
Main affiliation	1,308
Secondary affiliation	1,806

Source: Census of Population and Dwellings: *Iwi* Statistics, 1991 (NZDS).

common ancestry with and claim descent from the same ancestral canoe, *Takitimu*, as Ngāi Tahu, the *tangata whenua* 'host people' of the lower two-thirds of the South Island. By 1991 Kahungunu-affiliated people composed 15 percent of the total Māori population in Christchurch (NZDS 1991; Table 2).

In June 1987 Ngāti Kahungunu living in Christchurch formalized their kinship links by creating a tribal council or *rūnanga*<sup>5</sup> called *Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Kahungunu ki Waitaha*. The initiative was taken by a *kaumātua* 'elder', the late Te Okenga (Aussie) Huata. His action reflected a Kahungunu desire that Kahungunu living throughout the country form themselves into associations that would be given the status of associate *rūnanga* affiliated to *Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Kahungunu* 'The Grand Council of Ngāti Kahungunu'. (Whether this idea was fully understood and supported by the majority of Kahungunu people living at home is not clear. Most likely it was not; like most tribes, Kahungunu were totally immersed in developments on the local scene and had little time or energy to devote to their relations living in other parts of the country.)

After the inaugural *hui* held from 30 May to 1 June 1987, the *rūnanga* settled into a routine of weekly meetings to learn the traditional oral skills of *whaikōrero* 'oratory', *karanga* 'ceremonial calling' and *waiata* 'song', in a successful endeavor to raise the profile of Ngāti Kahungunu on the local *marae*. But it was soon recognized that the *rūnanga* must have a legal



identity if it wished to fulfil any publicly acknowledged community role. The first major step along this route was to write a constitution. The purpose, role, and function of the *rūnanga*, as seen by its members, are expressed in the objectives and rules for membership, as given in the constitution:

### *Objectives*

- 1 To maintain and strengthen the links between Ngāti Kahungunu living in the Waitaha area and *ngā taiwhenua o te kāinga* 'home districts'.
- 2 To be a representative body for Ngāti Kahungunu living in the Waitaha area.
- 3 To promote and support the learning and maintenance of Ngāti Kahungunu traditions.
- 4 To initiate, promote, and support economic, educational, spiritual, and social development for the benefit of all members.

### *Membership*

- 1 All persons of Ngāti Kahungunu descent living in the Canterbury area have automatic right of membership.
- 2 Membership is open to all people, but only persons of Ngāti Kahungunu descent may hold executive positions on the committee.
- 3 Voting rights are restricted to financial members.

Following the agenda set by Te Okenga, the *rūnanga* also wanted to formalize its links with home, and the matter was put to the chairman of the *rūnanganui*, Dr Pita Sharples, during his visit to Christchurch in June 1988. As a result, at the *rūnanganui* meeting in July, *Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Kahungunu ki Waitaha* was acknowledged as an official associate *rūnanga* to *Te Rūnanganui o Kahungunu*.

### *A Home, an Identity*

Very early in the *rūnanga*'s development, members felt that they needed their own building—a place to meet, to conduct their business, to give them an identity in the city. The existing urban *marae* could not fulfil this role as they all had their own individual umbrella groups (mainly churches), and the *rūnanga* was not prepared to submerge its identity



under any of these, regardless of how amicable the relationship might be. They investigated a number of possibilities, but each time stopped short of committing themselves to a building because of a lack of both funds and the confidence that they could meet mortgage repayments. The *rūnanga* also investigated a number of income-producing schemes, none of which came to fruition.<sup>6</sup> The *rūnanga* had to face the reality of maintaining a group identity without resources and with little hope of gaining any.

#### Ngāti Kahungunu ki Te Waipounamu

In November 1987 Kahungunu living in Dunedin invited other Kahungunu groups to join with them at a *hui* 'tribal gathering'. From the impetus of the Dunedin *hui*, the Christchurch Kahungunu set about organizing a pan-South Island tribal gathering in Christchurch. The *hui* hosted elders from the Kahungunu home territory and Kahungunu groups throughout the south, from Motueka, Blenheim, Ashburton, Dunedin, and Invercargill—a total of approximately three hundred people.

The South Island groups kept in touch, and at another *hui* on Hakatere marae, Ashburton, in April 1989 *Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Kahungunu ki Te Waipounamu* 'The Council of Ngāti Kahungunu in the South Island' was formed.<sup>7</sup>

#### *The Rūnanga and Government Policy*

On Sunday 12 July 1987, barely one month after the *rūnanga* had formed, Kahungunu were invited to attend a multitribal meeting in Christchurch to discuss the pending devolution of the Māori Affairs department. About two hundred people representing most of the tribes except Ngāi Tahu<sup>8</sup> were present. The meeting was told that the Māori Affairs department would be going out of existence and that its programs would be taken over by Māori groups capable of running them. Representatives were to report back to their own tribal groups and discuss their willingness to join a multitribal group that would in effect replace the Māori Affairs department (Table 3).<sup>9</sup>

As Kahungunu had only been meeting as an organized group for just over a month, they were somewhat reluctant to become involved in any pan-tribal group. However it was decided to keep in touch with developments, and two representatives were elected to what was to become *Te Rūnanga o Ngā Matawaka* 'the multitribal council'.<sup>10</sup> One of the conditions of affiliation was that Kahungunu would maintain control over its

Table 3. Government's Time Line for Transition of Programs from *Te Tira Ahu Iwi* to Iwi Authorities

---

1988	<i>He Tirohanga Rangapū</i> <i>Te Urupare Rangapū</i>
1989	An Iwi Authorities bill Iwi Transition Agency Ministry of Māori Affairs Government agencies become more responsive
<i>Transition period begins</i>	
1990	<i>Iwi</i> choice begins 150th anniversary of Treaty of Waitangi
1991	Iwi Development begins
1992–1993	Iwi Development continues
1994	TARGET DATE Iwi Authorities fully operational Iwi Transition Agency disbanded Government agencies fully responsive

---

Source: *Te Urupare Rangapū* (NZMMA 1988b).

---

own delegates and retain the right to withdraw from any issue in which they did not wish to become involved. In other words, they wanted to retain autonomy, their *tino rangatiratanga* 'sovereignty'.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Devolution Policy and Practice*

One of the problems that plagued the *rūnanga* during this period was that "devolution" meant taking over, on a voluntary basis, work that had been done by government departments funded by taxpayers. The theory was that Māori communities could handle Māori problems on their own and that under-resourced groups could implement social policy. The gap between theory and practice began to show when the *rūnanga* had to deal with social problems without resources of trained people and finance.

The Kahungunu *rūnanga*, either in its own right or as part of the Matawaka *rūnanga*, received none of the Iwi Transition Agency support prom-

ised in the government policy paper on devolution, *Te Urupare Rangapū* 'Partnership Response' (NZMMA 1988b). The only funding available was grant money, such as that distributed by community organization grants. In the devolution period 1987–1990, both the interdepartmental foster children program *Mātua Whāngai* 'Foster Parents'<sup>12</sup> and the devolving Māori Affairs department referred people seeking assistance to their own individual tribal group. For example, homeless Kahungunu persons who sought the assistance of the department would most likely be referred to the *rūnanga*. As the *rūnanga* had no other finance than that gained through donations and fund raising, any assistance they were able to offer was very limited. Referrals became a point of embarrassment when the *rūnanga* was not able to respond. Matters were not helped by people treating the *rūnanga* as an extension of the Social Welfare department, or by Māori Affairs staff guessing at individuals' *whakapapa* 'genealogy' and sending them to inappropriate groups. In some cases the *rūnanga* lent money to persons seeking assistance, on the understanding that the Māori Affairs department would reimburse them. This inevitably led to protracted negotiations as the *rūnanga* went through bureaucratic processes to obtain the promised refund. The gap between the theory and the practicalities of tribal groups looking after their own was a fundamental flaw in the devolution policy. Without either authority or resources, *taura here*<sup>13</sup> 'tribal groups affiliated to the homeland' in an urban situation were unable to carry the social responsibility for all who claimed kinship links.

#### Kahungunu ki Waitaha: *A Summary of the History*

Kahungunu living in Christchurch formed their *rūnanga* in response to a call from a tribal elder that sparked recognition of a widespread desire to retain their tribal identity and culture in the urban setting. In four years they established themselves as a separate tribal entity and were successful in establishing the Kahungunu presence on local *marae* and in Māori society. As a consequence the *rūnanga* became a very important and visible link in the social network of Christchurch Māori.

Very early in their formative stages *Kahungunu ki Waitaha* were overtaken by the macropolitics of both Māori and government, leading to a period of hyperactivity in trying to respond to the government's devolution policy. Devolution went from discussion to policy within eight months, and the *rūnanga*'s representatives, like those of all Māori organizations, were required to attend a constant round of meetings and famil-

iarize themselves with a flood of unfamiliar ideas and procedures. The burden of carrying radical political change fell on Māori and proved too great. In the Kahungunu *rūnanga*, as in others, interest in the political scene waned. There was a feeling that the progress or otherwise of the Iwi Transition Agency was of little relevance to Kahungunu in Christchurch. With the repeal of the Rūnanga Iwi Act by the incoming National Party in 1990 and the introduction of a new policy, *Ka Awatea* 'It Is Day',<sup>14</sup> which sealed the demise of devolution, most members felt like spectators watching an interesting but irrelevant drama. Nevertheless, *rūnanga* representatives continued to attend all local multiracial discussions and took a leading role in many activities. Two members have chaired the multiracial Ngā Matawaka *rūnanga*; one still holds that position.

The Kahungunu *rūnanga* was also successful in formalizing its links with other Kahungunu living throughout the South Island. It was less successful in establishing formal links with the *rūnanganui* back home. Even when formal recognition was given, links were tenuous. While Kahungunu ki Waitaha routinely communicated and sent the minutes of its meetings, the *rūnanganui* responded only occasionally.<sup>15</sup>

Two other areas where the *rūnanga* was less successful were in establishing a physical base and membership. From the thirteen hundred or so Kahungunu affiliates living in Christchurch, the maximum membership reached was a hundred. At the time of this writing the *rūnanga* continues to meet for social and cultural purposes.

### TE RŪNANGA O KAHUNGUNU KI WAITAHA: SOME CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions that can be drawn from this experience are that to create a lasting and active tribal entity outside the home territory requires more than just the motivation arising from nostalgia and emotional links with some distant tribe. The numbers of Kahungunu who did not affiliate with the *rūnanga* indicate a loss of understanding of a cohesive tribal identity; for these people tribal affiliation is of secondary importance when measured against other social realities of city life.

The group needed a material expression of their identity, a communally owned asset. The most appropriate asset would have been a meeting-house, a building whose style makes a statement about traditional Māori culture. Collectively, members were not prepared to risk their own capital to create this tangible expression of identity. This lack of confidence has

complex causes, which generally reflect the historic position of Māori as a colonized minority in New Zealand society. Having no home base breaks the traditional strong association between people and place that is central to traditional Māori identity, and this may have been crucial in the *rūnanga*'s failure to establish a strong outpost of collective Kahungunu identity. To this day, Kahungunu ki Waitaha remains a body whose identity lies solely in its people.

Given the city-wide distribution of members and the complexity of many of the issues facing an urban Māori group, an effective communications network was also essential, and the traditional "*kumara* vine" (informal communications network) proved inadequate. A bureaucratic infrastructure needed to be established if such a group were to be more than just a repository of traditions, but such a bureaucracy, for many Māori, is equated with a Pākehā way of doing things; the difficulty of convincing everyone of the utility of a system that was equated with negative experiences was considerable.

Another reason for the *rūnanga* not reaching its fullest potential was that creating a tribal outpost far from the home territory turned out to be too great an adjustment for the Māori psyche. Although this group tried to create a tribal enclave in a territory that belonged to another tribe, the whole weight of traditional notions of respect seemed to act against such a development. Also, the *rūnanga* was forced to operate without the support and protection of *kaumātua* and traditional precedents that are taken for granted in the home territory. The effect of the lack of strong support the *rūnanga* received from the *rūnanganui* in the home territory is hard to evaluate. What it may show, however, is the nonexportability of the tribal essence, which is summed up in the saying "*Ehara taku maunga i te maunga haere*" 'My mountain is not a mountain that moves'.

These factors, combined with the lack of support from the government, put the vision beyond the political and material capabilities of the group. The attempt to create a tribal outpost away from its traditional territories has not worked, the tribe remaining for its scattered members only a psychological bonding to the wider kin group and to the homeland. For the individual, this is important in its own right, and tribal identity will continue to be proudly proclaimed in song and oratory. But the experience of the Kahungunu *rūnanga* in Christchurch suggests that in the future, tribal identity will have very little tangible effect on the daily life of its members. Tribal groups in the city will continue to exist, at least while the first gen-

eration immigrants are still active, as social or cultural groups and as a support base for their delegates to pan-Māori organizations. Other than that they will probably remain politically passive.

### THE RŪNANGA AND THE GOVERNMENT: A COMMENT

The reintroduction of a traditional social entity into contemporary society is a very complex social phenomenon, as was highlighted by the difficulties in defining the tribe in the Rūnanga Iwi legislation of 1990. Tribal boundaries, for example, traditionally described as *rohe* or *kaha*, were a problem because of border areas claimed by overlapping groups. So the word *takiwā* was used because "it means an area contained rather than specific defined boundaries" (MM & TTAI nd, 7).

Another example was the attempt to create a legal identity for the tribe. What was an *iwi*? Who was a member? Many Māori were very reluctant to have *iwi* or tribal boundaries defined by law, for fear of losing control of these cultural institutions to the state. But to be eligible to receive government recognition and therefore public funding, these institutions had to be defined in law, which effectively put them under state control.

The anomalous position of Māori living outside their tribal area was highlighted by the difficulty of defining them for the purposes of the Act. The usual word for visitor, *manuhiri*, was rejected because it implies a short-term visit and an eventual return home, and a very obscure word from the nineteenth-century Taranaki dialect, *ruranga* 'guest' was adopted (MM & TTAI nd, 7). This real difficulty in finding a suitable word to describe Māori who live permanently away from their tribal territory is indicative of the limitations of relying solely on a traditional social institution to define a contemporary phenomenon.

These examples show how throughout this whole process concepts and language were manipulated to fit legislative requirements—a factor that was not unnoticed by the Māori public. Although the Rūnanga Iwi Act was eventually passed into law, there was such unease about its implications that, when it was repealed by the National Party in January 1991, not one Māori voice was raised in protest.

### CONCLUSIONS

The experience of Kahungunu ki Waitaha has shown that the opinions of both Ritchie and Mafeje, at the two ends of the spectrum of opinion, have

some substance, and that retribalization creates as well as solves social dilemmas. McRoberts's primordial and contextual ethnicity theories are also helpful in explaining Māori society. At times, however, his two theoretical positions appear to be diametrically opposed, and at others, to be operating in tandem—sometimes even espoused by the same person: "In the city I operate as a Māori but at home I am a tribal person."

The limitations of existing theories show that a new theoretical base for the study and definition of the tribe in contemporary Māori society is required. I have concluded that the process of detribalization is irreversible, and that the notion of the tribe-cum-nation as an expression of *mana Māori motuhake* 'Māori sovereignty' is more an ideology of the politically active and the educated elite than a reality for the flax roots of Māori society. The issue cannot be seen in terms of a simple opposition between tribal social organization and pan-Māori groupings; retribalization in the 1990s, if it is to be effective, requires a radical redefinition of tribe rather than the revitalization of a traditional sociopolitical grouping. Membership of the new tribe will need to be defined by association, commitment, and domiciliary location rather than by descent alone. The strictly descent- or kinship-centered tribe will continue to exist, but should be increasingly confined to managing and receiving the benefits of communally owned assets, and akin to a relationship between shareholders as opposed to a community relationship. I hold the position that change is inevitable, and that Māori should endeavor to control it.

This view is rooted in observation of the impracticality of a distant tribe providing social services for anyone who claims membership by descent, and the equally impractical alternative of a host tribe being responsible for the social problems of an urban center largely populated by members of other tribes. The first option is impractical because the lines of communication are too long, and also because local and immediate social problems dominate the focus of tribal development in the home areas. The second option is also impractical because the resources and social organizations of the host tribe are inadequate to meet the challenges of catering for the needs of large, multitribal, urban populations. Further, implicit in the reliance of immigrant Māori on the largesse of the host people is the continuation of dependence. A diversion from dependence on a Pākehā-dominated state system to dependence on a system controlled by the host people is still dependence.

A host-visitor relationship, which puts the host people in charge on the grounds of their ascribed status, can be discouraging for immigrant



Māori. It can stifle their initiative and lead them to channel their talents and energy away from the Māori world to an open environment, where they can reach their fullest potential without fear of offending the sensitivities, real or imagined, of the host people.

### FUTURE OPTIONS

Of recent times, especially with the subcontracting of the South Island functions of the new Ministry of Māori Development (*Te Puni Kōkiri*) to Ngāi Tahu, there appears to be some renewed interest in tribal-group associations. However, this time it is unlikely that single groups like the Kahungunu *rūnanga* will be at the forefront; more likely, the multitribal Matawaka will represent the non-Ngāi Tahu in Christchurch city.

Te Rūnanga o Matawaka is a multitribal organization that stemmed from the idea of establishing urban Māori authorities, as suggested in the Rūnanga Iwi Act, as an option for large urban Māori populations. It has parallels in other cities, such as the Manukau Urban Authority in South Auckland and the Waipareira Trust in West Auckland. Matawaka consists of delegates from the various organized tribal groups and has recently opened an office in central Christchurch. The future of this type of organization will depend on the strength of the commitment of its *kaumātua* leadership and *iwi* delegates. It has an image problem both internally and externally, and there is a danger that member groups and individuals will see the Matawaka as a welfare center in place of the former Māori Affairs department.

If the Matawaka *rūnanga* does stand the test of time and develop as the acknowledged voice of non-Ngāi Tahu people residing in Christchurch, it will be an example of a tribal social organization with primary criteria for membership centered on domiciliary location rather than descent. Although this type of organization represents a radical departure from both traditional and contemporary popular conceptions of the tribe, it is still recognizably tribal.

Another possibility is that strong Māori social groups, such as sports clubs, employment trusts, culture clubs, or educational groups, may develop a political voice and become active beyond their own special area of interest. Such a move would be a radical shift from the tribe as currently conceptualized, but may well reflect the social reality for Māori living in the city. Either option is problematic for the host tribe and for



national organizations such as the National Māori Congress. However, these are problems Māoridom must face: to ignore the demographic picture and the reality of association patterns is to court failure to establish any lasting sociopolitical binding of the Māori community.

\* \* \*

AN EARLIER VERSION of this paper was presented at the ninth Pacific History Association conference at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, in December 1992. I would like to express my thanks to my colleague Lyndsay Head for her professional advice and assistance, and I greet my whānau Ngāti Kahungunu ki Waitaha, whose experiences over the period 1987 to 1993 are the basis of this study.

## APPENDIX: EXTRACTS FROM THE RŪNANGA IWI ACT 1990

### SECTION 2: INTERPRETATION

<i>Rūnanga</i>	a council of an <i>iwi</i> or of two or more <i>iwi</i> .
<i>Ruranga</i>	a Māori who lives in the <i>takiwā</i> of another <i>iwi</i> .
<i>Takiwā</i>	the territory where an <i>iwi</i> is <i>tangata whenua</i>
<i>Taura here</i>	a group established by an incorporated <i>rūnanga</i> for those <i>iwi</i> members who live within the <i>takiwā</i> of another <i>iwi</i> .

### SECTION 5: ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF IWI

For the purposes of this Act only, an *iwi* has the following characteristics: descent from *tūpuna*; *hapū*; *marae*; belonging historically to a *takiwā*; existence traditionally and widely acknowledged by other *iwi*.

### SECTION 6: RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF IWI

The *iwi* is an enduring and traditional form of social, political and economic organisation for Māori.

(This does not diminish the importance of other groupings such as *whānau*, *hapū*, or confederations of *iwi*.)

### SECTION 28: RURANGA RIGHTS

The main duty of an incorporated *rūnanga* is to look after the members of the *iwi* it represents. However, every *rūnanga* is required by the Act to respect and

uphold the rights of *ruranga* in accordance with its charter, or by acknowledging the right of other *iwi* to establish *taura here* groups in the *takiwā* for the *ruranga*.

#### SECTION 29: TAURA HERE

When a *rūnanga* knows many of its *iwi* members are living in the *takiwā* of another incorporated *rūnanga* it can consult with that *rūnanga* about setting up a *taura here* (providing the charter of that other *rūnanga* allows *taura here* to be set up). If no incorporated *rūnanga* exists in that *takiwā* in which the *taura here* is to be set up, the *iwi* with *mana whenua* must be consulted.

If a *taura here* group is established the Registrar of *Rūnanga* must be notified. If *taura here* groups want to set up as an Incorporated Society or a Charitable Trust or any other corporate body under other legislation, they can do so with the agreement of the incorporated *rūnanga*. (Italics added.)

#### Notes

1 The term *pan-Māori* is used in this paper to denote Māori as a homogeneous group.

2 For the sake of readers unfamiliar with the Māori language, Māori words are italicized throughout this paper, except in direct quotations, even though this is not New Zealand policy.

3 Maori are around 13 percent of the total population and are represented by only 4 of the 97 seats in parliament.

4 An Iwi Authority is a corporate group elected by an *iwi*, or a group of *iwi*, to deal with the government on its behalf. Where tribal authorities already existed as legal entities, the government proposed to deal with them unless *iwi* determined otherwise (NZMMA 1988b, 10).

5 Barlow (1991) noted that the distinguishing feature of a *rūnanga* is that its members are elected. He is correct only insofar as the term is used in the government policy as laid out in Te Urupare Rangapū. Where the title is used in relation to *taura here*, membership is based on common descent and voluntary association.

6 There was a lack of commitment to go any further than the planning stage with any project involving a financial outlay. This was probably because many people in the *rūnanga* were heavily committed to a sports association and were not prepared to give the time or effort required for any commercial scheme.

7 This South Island-wide network of Kahungunu groups was considered nec-

essary because most Kahungunu felt they were being excluded from meaningful discussions on Iwi Development. The network was also seen as giving substance to Te Okenga's vision of a Kahungunu network throughout the country, a vision, as is later noted, that was not shared universally throughout Kahungunu.

8 This failure of the organizers of the *hui* to invite Ngāi Tahu representation was an unfortunate oversight that would bedevil intertribal negotiations in the years to follow and probably precluded any possibility of a unified organization of Christchurch-based Ngāi Tahu and Matawaka people. *Matawaka* 'tribe', 'clan', 'race' (Williams 1971) is an oratorical expression denoting the canoes of origin and is used as an inclusive honorific to cover all Māori regardless of tribal affiliation. In Christchurch, at least since the advent of Iwi Development, the term is used to include all Māori who are not of Ngāi Tahu descent.

9 The assumption that local groups could simply establish an organization and replace the Māori Affairs department was to prove far from realistic. It indicated the confusion created by the lack of a clear government policy on the devolution of the Māori Affairs department and the implementation of the Rūnanga Iwi Act of 1990.

10 Te Rūnanga o Ngā Matawaka is a multitribal *rūnanga* that was formed to become the representative voice for the Māori community in Christchurch. Because of its inauspicious start there was opposition from local Ngāi Tahu, and today Te Rūnanga o Ngā Matawaka represents only those tribes who choose to affiliate with it.

11 The same sentiment would be echoed by tribal representatives three years later at the national *hui* at Ratana Pa that was to see the formation of the National Māori Congress.

12 Matua Whāngai is a government policy based on the traditional concept of children being raised by adults other than their birth parents. It was launched as a policy in 1986 under the umbrella of the Māori Affairs, Social Welfare, and Justice departments, to prevent children "at risk" from being institutionalized.

13 *Taura here* 'the rope that binds'. This phrase comes from the concept that Māori are bound by spiritual ties to their ancestors and to the land of their tribal origins. The phrase is used in the government-sponsored foster-parenting policy, Matua Whāngai, and has come to mean a tribal group that lives outside its own tribal territory.

14 *Ka Awatea* is a policy for Māori development launched by former Minister for Māori Affairs Winston Peters. The policy has not been officially adopted by the government, but appears to be the guiding philosophy for *Te Puni Kōkiri*, the Ministry of Māori Development.

15 This ambivalence toward Kahungunu living away from home was witnessed at a *rūnanganui* meeting in September 1990, when the representatives from

the Kahungunu groups living in Wellington petitioned for voting rights on the *rū-nanganui*. It appears that Te Okenga's vision of connecting Kahungunu throughout the country was an individual one and not seriously part of any tribal strategy.

## References

- Armstrong, M. Jocelyn  
 1987 Māori identity in the South Island of New Zealand: Ethnic Identity Development in a Migration Context. *Oceania* 57 (3): 57.
- Banton, M.  
 1987 *Racial Theories*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barlow, Cleave  
 1991 *Tikanga Whakaaro: Key Concepts in Māori Culture*. Auckland: Oxford University Press.
- Butterworth, Graeme V.  
 1991 *Ngā Take I Neke Ai te Māori: He Iwi Pokai Whenua*, Māori Mobility: A Journeying People. Wellington: Manatū Māori.  
 1990 *Maori Affairs*. Wellington: Government Printing Office.  
 1972 A Rural Renaissance? Māori Society and Politics 1920 to 1951. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 81:183-186.
- Conn, Stephen, and Steve J. Langdon  
 1988 Retribalization as a Strategy for Achievement of Group and Individual Social Security in Alaska Native Villages—with a Special Focus on Subsistence. In *Between Kinship and the State: Social Security and Law in Developing Countries*, edited by F. von Benda-Beckmann et al, 437-450. Dordrecht: Loris Publications.
- Firth, Raymond  
 1959 *Economics of the New Zealand Maori*. Wellington: Government Printer.
- Heenan, L. D. B.  
 1966 The Changing South Island Māori Population. *New Zealand Geographer* 22:125-165.
- Himona, R.  
 1989 *Te Pūtātara*. August. (Wellington magazine, now defunct.)
- Laidlaw, Christopher  
 1993 Commonsense on Race. *Metro* (magazine), February. Auckland.
- Lian Kuan Fee  
 1987 Interpreting Māori History: A Case for Historical Sociology. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 96 (4, December): 445-471.

Maaka, Roger C. A.

- 1993 *Te Ao o te Pakeketanga—The World of the Aged*. In *New Zealand's Ageing Society: The Implications*, edited by P. G. Koopman-Boyden, 213–229. Wellington: Daphne Brasell.

McRoberts, K.

- 1979 Internal Colonialism: The Case for Quebec. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2 (3, July): 210–211.

Metge, Joan

- 1976 *A New Māori Migration: Rural and Urban Relations in Northern New Zealand*. London: Athlone Press.
- 1990 *Te Rito o te Harakeke: Conceptions of the Whānau*. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 99 (1, March): 55–92.

MM & TTAI, *Manatū Māori & Te Tira Ahu Iwi*

- 1988 Report to the Māori Affairs Select Committee on the Rūnanga Iwi Bill.

NZDS, New Zealand Department of Statistics

- 1993 *Iwi Population and Dwellings: 1991 Census of Population and Dwellings*. Wellington.

NZDSW, New Zealand Department of Social Welfare

- 1986 *Pūao-te-ata-tū*. Ministerial Advisory Committee on Māori Perspectives for the Department of Social Welfare. Wellington.

NZMMA, New Zealand Ministry of Māori Affairs

- 1988a *He Tirohanga Rangapū: He Whakawhitiwhiti Whakaaro*, 'Partnership Perspectives: A Discussion Paper. April. Wellington: Office of Minister of Māori Affairs.
- 1988b *Te Urupare Rangapū: Te Rarangi Kaupapa*, 'Partnership Response: Policy Statement [on Iwi Development]. November. Wellington: Office of Minister of Māori Affairs.

Park, Robert E.

- 1950 *Race and Culture*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Pearson, David, and David Thorns

- 1983 *Eclipse of Equality*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Rangihau, John

- 1975 Being Maori. In *Te Ao Hurihuri: The World Moves On*, edited by Michael King, 221–233. Wellington: Hodder & Stoughton.

Ritchie, James

- 1992 *Becoming Bicultural*. Wellington: Daphne Brasell and Huia.

*Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Kahungunu ki Waitaha*

- 1987 Minute book. In possession of rūnanga.
- 1991 Constitution. In possession of rūnanga.

Sharp, Andrew

- 1990 The Problem of Māori Affairs, 1984–1989. In *The Fourth Labour Government: Politics and Policy in New Zealand*, edited by M. Holland and J. Boston. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Sivanadan, A.

- 1985 R[acial] A[wareness] T[raining] and the Degradation of Black Struggle. *Race & Class* 26 (4): 1–33.

Williams, H. W., compiler

- 1971 *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*. 7th edition. Wellington: Government Printer.

### *Abstract*

This study is about the formal retribalization of a group of urban Māori against a changing political backdrop. In 1987 Ngāti Kahungunu people living in Christchurch formalized their kinship links with the intent of maintaining tribal identity in a metropolitan setting, strengthening ties to the tribal homeland, and providing a mutual support network. Urbanization is not the only factor; this event is also an example of a tribal group attempting to establish themselves corporately in another tribe's territory. Although this local development took place independently, it became part of a nationwide move to enable tribal organizations to deliver government-funded programs and reestablish sovereignty over tribal territories and assets. The paradox in this development lies in reclaiming sovereignty on the one hand and establishing socially active tribal satellites in another tribe's territory on the other. This paradox is often glossed over and ignored by both government and tribal leaders. I question whether the tribal satellites can survive as communal groups outside their home territories given the current development of the top-down processes of government policies and the elitist formulations of tribal structure and identity.